

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend the young members of the Mt. Vernon, IL Future Farmers of America who have won the Illinois FFA career development contest and will soon head to the national contest in Kansas City, MO.

As part of the contest, this group of young men and women from southern Illinois was asked to choose a topic of debate on agriculture. The Mt. Vernon FFA chose to debate on the ethanol tax incentive, which is so important to the environment, energy independency, and economic growth in this country.

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FFA debate team members will now travel to Kansas City on November 12 to debate with other FFA groups nationally.

I want to commend the Mount Vernon Township High School FFA for their hard work and wish each and every one of them the best of luck in debating ethanol in Kansas City.

Hopefully, they can come out and help me as we fight for the ethanol tax credit here in Washington, DC.

EDUCATION: REAFFIRMING OUR COMMITMENT

(Mr. FILNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I rise today along with many of my colleagues to reaffirm our commitment to the education of our children and to our role in supporting local initiatives for strong neighborhood public schools.

One fine example of a local initiative which has fostered the success of thousands of children in my home State of California is the Parent Institute for Quality Education which has just celebrated its 10th anniversary. The primary emphasis of the Institute and its founder, Vahac Mardirosian, is the involvement of parents in their children's education. The Institute provides parents with the skills and knowledge necessary to become actively involved with their kids both at home and in their children's schools.

The Institute works with schools that have the most at-risk students. By building partnerships between parents, teachers and school administrators, the work and efforts of each are strengthened and every measure of quality education is demonstrably improved.

Plans to increase parental involvement in all our schools are included in the Democratic agenda for first class public schools. I encourage my colleagues to support this agenda which reaffirms our commitment to our children and to public education in our Nation.

COINCIDENCE OR ABUSE OF POWER

(Mr. HEFLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HEFLEY. Madam Speaker, the President of the United States says that we should not politicize the IRS. I agree. So let us see if I have got this straight.

The White House is going to be the defender of the IRS from politics. That must be awfully inspiring to the conservative groups and critics of the Clinton administration who have all suddenly found themselves targeted for an audit. Pure coincidence, I am sure.

Look at the record. Let us see how this nonpolitical IRS is working out in reality. A nonprofit group in Wisconsin, Fortress America, mailed a fund-raising letter criticizing Hillary Clinton. What happened? Coincidence time. They got audited. A charter company, UltraAir, was one of those who got the ax in the travel office scandal. What happened? Coincidence time. They got audited. Billy Dale, coincidence time again, he got audited. Paula Jones brings a lawsuit. You guessed it. Another audit. Coincidence or abuse of power? You decide.

NATIONAL SAVE OUR CHILDREN DAY

(Ms. CHRISTIAN-GREEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. CHRISTIAN-GREEN. Madam Speaker, not just October 27, but every day should be National Save Our Schools Day. As I see it, October 27 and every day should be National Save Our Children Day. This is the test by which our generation will be judged. The degree to which our Nation prospers in the 21st century and beyond will depend on our success as leaders in developing safe, well-equipped and well-managed public educational institutions which will promote and nurture the academic, social, and emotional development of our children from the very beginning of their lives.

Today, much of the greatness that this country could realize is being lost in the broken down hallways and ill-equipped classrooms of the public school system which we have created through our neglect.

No one would disagree that the system as a whole is dysfunctional, but would not this Congress be also dysfunctional if conditions were in the same despicable state in which too many of our children spend most of their young impressionable lives? Every day that this nation's children enter most of our public schools, the message that they get is that we, their leaders, do not care and they naturally respond in kind. So, Madam Speaker, not just on Monday, but every day we should make saving our children from despair and neglect our highest priority.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY HELPS THOSE WHO HELP THEMSELVES

(Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland asked and was given permission to address

the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to congratulate Habitat for Humanity for kicking off a 6-week effort to construct five town homes in Fredericksburg, MD. Since 1976 Habitat for Humanity has used the model that the Lord helps those who help themselves to build simple decent homes in all 50 of the United States and more than 50 other countries. Habitat for Humanity is an ecumenical religious housing ministry that welcomes all people's participation and donations in their work.

By providing decent housing, using donated materials and volunteer labor, habitat builds the self-esteem and self-reliance of God's people in need and builds a stronger sense of community among all people by providing opportunities for individuals to bear active witness to their individual faiths and responsibilities as members of a community. I commend Habitat for Humanity for building homes and strengthening our communities.

UNION PACIFIC MONOPOLY

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Speaker, freight rail service in large parts of the Western United States is at the point of collapse. Shipments have been delayed for weeks, even lost for months. That is not uncommon. Rail car shortages are so bad that plants in my district and throughout the Northwest are laying off workers, curtailing production for which they have orders because they cannot ship the product and they have got no place to put it.

Union Pacific's response has been, we are a monopoly now. We really do not care very much about your problems because you have got no place else to turn. Shippers have turned to the Service Transportation Board of the Government in desperation and now Union Pacific has a response, a suggested form letter with a carbon copy to President Dick Davidson of UP saying, we do not want any help or intervention, things might get better. UP is going to fix things now. They are paying attention.

They are being coerced into signing these letters, they are telling me, for fear that the dribble of rail cars they are now getting will be totally shut off. The Government has to step in and get the attention of this monopoly and straighten this out.

GROSS ABUSE AT IRS

(Mrs. LINDA SMITH of Washington asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. LINDA SMITH of Washington. Madam Speaker, the American people were treated to quite a spectacle last week. Year after year, we have heard